

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least one remote source, during one or more advertisement download sessions;

an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device;

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;

an obscured ad monitor function that determines whether an obscured ad condition has occurred, whereby the obscured ad condition occurs when an advertisement currently being displayed on the display associated with the client device is being obscured by one or more other items currently being displayed on the display; and

an obscured ad nag function that generates an obscured ad nag display in response to detection of the obscured ad condition, wherein the obscured ad nag display notifies the user of the obscured ad condition.

2. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the obscured ad nag display further notifies the user that the obscured nag display will be generated upon each future occurrence of an obscured ad condition.

3. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

4. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the obscured ad nag display further notifies the user that the user has the following choices:

remove whatever is obscuring the obscured advertisement;

maintain the status quo, so that every future occurrence of an obscured ad condition will result in the generation of the obscured ad nag display; and

switch the operating mode of the software from a first operating mode to a second operating mode, wherein the second operating mode has less features than the first operating mode.

5. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the obscured ad nag display further notifies the user that the user has the following choices:

remove whatever is obscuring the obscured advertisement;
maintain the status quo, so that every future occurrence of an obscured ad condition will result in the generation of the obscured ad nag display; and

switch the operating mode of the software from a first operating mode to a second operating mode, wherein the second operating mode has less features than the first operating mode.

6. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

7. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the software is e-mail software.

8. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one remote source is operated by a vendor of the software.

9. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the software is subsidized by revenues attributable to the downloaded advertisements.

10. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one remote source comprises an advertisement distribution server system that is operated by a vendor of the software in order to distribute advertisements to clients of the vendor for the purpose of subsidizing the software.

11. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the at least one remote source comprises an advertisement distribution server system that includes:

at least one ad server which stores at least one of a plurality of advertisements to be downloaded; and

at least one playlist server which stores at least one playlist each of which contains a list of the plurality of advertisements to be downloaded, and the address of the ad server where each listed advertisement is stored.

12. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 11, wherein the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software.

13. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 11, wherein the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store one or more advertisements to be distributed to the client device.

14. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 11, wherein:
the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software;
the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store one or more advertisements to be distributed to clients of the vendor of the software; and
at least one of the plurality of ad servers is controlled by the vendor of the software.

15. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 11, wherein:
the at least one playlist server is controlled by a vendor of the software;
the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers that each store one or more advertisements to be distributed to clients of the vendor of the software; and
at least one of the plurality of ad servers is controlled by an entity other than the vendor of the software that has granted the vendor of the software and its clients access to its ad server(s).

16. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 7, wherein the software is compatible with a plurality of e-mail service providers.

17. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 7, wherein the software is not tied to a particular e-mail service provider.

18. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 7, wherein the software is operational across a plurality of different e-mail systems.

19-50. (Canceled)

51. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

52. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on the client device.

53. (Original) The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client device.

54-60 (Canceled).